Connecting people with ideas

ANNUAL REPORT • 2017
The transformative power of the humanities

For more than four decades, New Hampshire Humanities has led hundreds of thousands of Granite Staters on journeys of discovery; inviting people of all ages to think, learn, and connect with one another in meaningful and sometimes surprising ways.

Each year, in partnership with more than 300 local organizations, New Hampshire Humanities brings opportunities for learning, reflection, and civil conversation to Granite Staters through free public programs and broadcasts held in 150 different communities in every corner of the state.

These live, face-to-face encounters enhance our capacity to discern, reflect, listen, and converse thoughtfully and respectfully. They reinforce the obligations of citizenship. And they build trust and connect neighbors, nearby and around the globe.

www.nhhumanities.org
New Hampshire Humanities’ most accessible and far-reaching program is *Humanities to Go*, our popular traveling speakers bureau. *Humanities to Go* features 100 presenters who offer nearly 200 topics to community groups throughout the state. In 2017, we sponsored a total of 444 free public *Humanities to Go* programs attended by 15,376 people in 194 communities. Last year saw the addition of 30 new programs to our roster, which has significantly increased the availability of *Humanities to Go* programming across the state.

*Humanities to Go* presenters include faculty members at our state’s colleges and universities as well as spot-on performers of living history, engaging teachers, and dynamic community-based scholars. Each has translated in-depth knowledge about a topic into a single, compelling presentation with built-in time for questions and discussion. Learn more and browse our online catalog at [www.nhhumanities.org/humanitiestogo](http://www.nhhumanities.org/humanitiestogo).

“*Humanities to Go* allows us to have a professional presentation around which to gear our other programming. Because the offerings are so varied we find ourselves exploring new topics that we may not have otherwise considered. Using *Humanities to Go* programs as focal points, rather than stand-alone events, has changed the way we think about programming for our community.”

– Julie, Merrimack Public Library
“People from all levels come together and talk. Some people can’t read... I couldn’t read more than “Dick and Jane,” and now I can read anything!” – Connections adult literacy student

New Hampshire Humanities’ adult literacy program Connections brings the best of children’s and young adult literature together with New Hampshire Humanities-trained discussion facilitators to more than 500 adult learners each year. Quality books and stimulating discussions promote English language skills, cultivate conversations about ideas, reinforce family literacy, support a culture of reading, and encourage civic engagement. Connections works in partnership with adult basic education and ESOL classes, refugee resettlement organizations, services for adults with developmental disabilities and state and county prisons. Participants are both native speakers and new Americans.

Connections participants keep the books they read; incarcerated parents send them home to their children along with a recording of their personal reading. Each four-week series is organized around a theme such as “Planting the Earth,” “Picturing America’s Stories,” “Journeys,” “A Day’s Work,” and “A Sense of Place.” In a recent book discussion group at the State Prison for Women in Goffstown, mothers explored the themes in Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet and engaged in lively discussion about the play’s universal themes.

Herein lies the beauty and relevance of classical literature—Shakespeare’s words reaching across four centuries to touch the minds of women behind the walls of a prison, making true opportunity available to all who read. Literature offers discovery, linking the reader to ideas and concepts beyond their everyday frame of reference while encouraging self-reflection, and the development of conscience, discernment, and a sense of possibility. And for the mothers at Goffstown Prison, books also give them a tangible link to their children and help build strong relationships with their children, a foundation for success in life inside and outside. To learn more about Connections stories, visit www.nhhumanities.org/connections or watch our short video HERE.
The Natural and Cultural History of Soil: Cultivating Fertile Soil, Generating Resilient Communities
A series of educational events on the theme of soil as the foundation of a healthy food system – and healthy society. Keynote by David Montgomery, author of *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations*.

Over There, Over Here: World War I & Life in New Hampshire Communities
A multi-town, multi-event commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the United States’ entry into World War I putting the war in social context. Topics ranged from life stories of local service men and women to examination of the profound changes in America’s culture and economy due to the Great War.

The Elephant-in-the-Room Series
A series of play readings and discussions about hard-to-talk-about social issues: human trafficking, mental illness, the opioid crisis and its effect on families, and death and dying.

The First Amendment Inside the Schoolhouse Gate
Exploration of First Amendment free speech doctrine in the public school setting via a public discussion, a teacher professional development conference, podcast, and video.

More than Just Ourselves: Willard Uphaus, Louis Wyman, and Civil Liberties in the McCarthy Era
Radio broadcast and panel discussions in two communities about *Uphaus v. Wyman*, a McCarthy-era legal case that took a conflict between the New Hampshire attorney general and the director of a White Mountains conference center all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

30 Pages in 30 Days, Season Two
Social issue playwriting workshops and a writing competition culminating in a “play-off” among three finalists with production of the winner’s one-act play on summer theater mainstage.

Abraham Lincoln: Behind White House Doors
A lecture series and facilitated book discussion of Joshua Zeitz’s *Lincoln’s Boys*. How do individual memories and politics color historical accounts? In what ways did Lincoln— and leaders today— balance regional attitudes and states’ rights with those of national interests?

Teacher Workshop: Immigration History in the Granite State
A two-day, professional development workshop for teachers exploring the immigration experience in the Granite State between the 1860s and 1940s.

Keene Chautauqua: World War I and America through eyes of W.E.B. Dubois & Woodrow Wilson
Living history presentation featuring Paul Vickery as Wilson discussing the reasons why the United States belatedly entered the war in 1917, and Charles Everett Pace as Dubois noting some of the major contributions of African Americans who served in the war.
HAMPSTEAD STAGE COMPANY, BARNSTEAD

**The Signature Series: Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, Season Two**

A training for actors to lead three post-performance talk backs about Mary Shelley's dramatic work that explored the connections between science, technology, art, and what it means to be human.

SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

**Rethinking Resistance: Oney Judge, George Washington’s Runaway Slave, and the Meanings of Escape**

A public talk by historian Erica Armstrong Dunbar grappling with the complexities of American identity, complicity, and resistance through the life of Oney Judge, who was born into slavery at Mount Vernon, fled to New Hampshire in her 20s, and lived here as a fugitive until her death at 75.

BERLIN PUBLIC LIBRARY, BERLIN

**The World War II We Never Knew**

A series exploring less well-known World War II stories starting with facilitated discussions of Elizabeth Norman's *We Band of Angels: The Untold Story of the American Women Trapped on Bataan* and Thomas Childers’ *Soldier from the War Returning: The Greatest Generation’s Troubled Homecoming from World War II*, continuing with a film on New Hampshire during WWII, and a family story from the enemy perspective.

OYSTER RIVER COMMUNITY READ, DURHAM/LEE/MADBURY

**Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race**

Seed money for a three-town “regional read” with multiple programs exploring race, culture, and diversity, and a visit by author and racial justice educator Deborah Irving.

NORTH COUNTRY CENTER FOR THE ARTS D/B/A JEAN’S PLAYHOUSE, LINCOLN

**Will Power: Shakespeare in the Juvenile Justice System**

Advance work for a six-week, after-school program for adjudicated youth using Shakespeare's plays to change the trajectory of their lives.

LITTLETON PUBLIC LIBRARY, LITTLETON

**In Her Words: Inspirational Women from New England History**

Three-part series on women of note in New England history through living history, storytelling, and book discussion, exploring the lives of women who pushed the boundaries of traditional gender roles.

WHIPPLE FREE LIBRARY, NEW BOSTON

**Back Over There: One American Time-Traveler 100 Years Since the Great War**

Discussion by author Richard Rubin about America's essential role in World War I, its legacy, and how it is remembered (in France) and isn't (here in the United States).

FRIENDS OF THE FREMONT LIBRARY, FREMONT

**The Story of Baker Chocolate: A Sweet History**

An industrial history talk by regional historian Anthony Sammarco on the Baker Chocolate Company, founded in Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1765, by a well-heeled doctor eager to invest his fortune and a penniless Irishman who possessed the rare skills needed to make chocolate.
Special Projects

**HYPE (Hosting Young Philosophy Enthusiasts)**

In celebration of its centennial in 2016, the Pulitzer Board partnered with the Federation of State Humanities Councils on a $1.7 million project aimed at deepening the public discourse around the values embodied by the Pulitzer Prizes. As part of this *Campfires Initiative*, New Hampshire Humanities received a $30,000 grant that supported two highly successful events—a public forum featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonists and humanities scholars for a lively discussion of cartooning and First Amendment Rights, and the HYPE conference led by high school students.

The HYPE initiative, founded by students at Souhegan High School and guided by Chris Brooks, director of the school’s Ethics Forum, draws more than 1,000 high school students and teachers from all over the state to take part in group and panel discussions exploring challenging topics such as freedom of expression, censorship, and citizenship. Students also develop leadership skills by planning and running all aspects of HYPE, including budgeting, fundraising, marketing, and logistical coordination.

The growth of HYPE reflects a growing national student movement to study philosophy as a way to build the skills of respectful dialogue and reasoned debate. The critical thinking inspired at HYPE improves problem-solving capacity and nuanced thinking about difficult issues, and the study and practice of philosophy feeds young peoples’ desire to know, to think, and to reason together.

At the national celebration of the Pulitzer Centennial, New Hampshire Humanities was recognized in a speech given by Keven Willey, co-chair of the Pulitzer Board. Underscoring the importance of humanities projects like HYPE, Willey remarked, “It has never, ever, been more important than it is right now to focus on the values of engagement, enlightenment, truth telling, and inspiration.”

As part of the grant, New Hampshire Humanities partnered with Atlantic Media Productions on a documentary about HYPE as a model of student-led civics education. For a behind-the-scenes look at HYPE, watch the video [HERE](#).
A reading and discussion group for veterans & service members

*Dialogues on the Experience of War & Homecoming* was a 14-week book discussion series using ancient literature and contemporary readings to help veterans release and re-appropriate their experiences of war and return. The facilitation model was developed by Roberta Stewart, Professor of Classics at Dartmouth College, who has conducted book discussions with and for veterans for nine years in the Upper Valley. Each facilitator team consisted of a literary scholar, a clinician from the veteran-serving community, and a veteran. In the fall of 2016 book groups began in Hanover, Littleton, Manchester, and Portsmouth.

This project is based on a belief in the power of reading and storytelling to build personal and collective identity and deepen human ties. Through the act of reading in community with others, veterans discovered timeless and universal truths that provided moments of reflection and insight for mapping a return home from war.

The convictions behind this project are deeply resonant with the mission of New Hampshire Humanities – to engage the public in important human stories and questions through civil discourse and community-based programs. In this case, the problems of veteran homecoming emerge as historical problems that cross cultural, political, ethnic, and class boundaries.

Click [HERE](#) for press coverage New Hampshire Humanities received about this innovative statewide program.

This program was generously sponsored by:

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Launched in 2015, the $3.2 million Campaign for the Humanities will allow New Hampshire Humanities to invest in new ventures in programming and communications, reduce dependence on federal funding, and establish a hub for innovation and collaboration. We thank the following donors for their generosity in helping ensure that the humanities remain accessible to all New Hampshire residents for decades to come.

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